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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MUSLIM OUTREACH IN MOZAMBIQUE

1. (SBU) Summary: Post is cognizant of the religious diversity in Mozambique and has taken efforts to include representatives from various religious groups, including Muslims, in its outreach efforts. Given the current demographics of Mozambique and recent world events, post is expanding these efforts. End Summary.

BACKGROUND

2. (SBU) Mozambique's rapidly growing Muslim population is generally moderate and well integrated into broader Mozambican society. Approximately 20 percent of Mozambicans who profess a recognized religion are Muslim 24 percent are Roman Catholic, 22 percent are Protestant, and. However, many Muslim clerics disagree with this statistic, claiming that Islam is the country's majority religion. The northern provinces and the coastal strip are the most strongly Muslim areas of the country. Most members of Mozambique's Indian community are Muslim, though they tend to remain separate from the larger black Islamic community. In northern cities such as Pemba and Nampula, the Indian and Pakistani communities control much of the local commerce. Religious groups, including Muslim groups, operate in Mozambique without impediment, and religious freedom is guaranteed under the Constitution. Muslim missionaries from South Africa and the Kuwaiti-based Africa Muslim Agency have established Islamic schools ("madrassas") in many cities and towns in the northern provinces and the capital Maputo. In early 2003, the Islamic Community completed construction of a Grand Mosque in downtown Maputo. A large number of small mosques have recently been constructed with external financing in the northern province of Nampula.

3. (SBU) The Government of Mozambique does not favor a particular religion, nor is there a state or dominant religion. Though the law governing political parties specifically forbids religious parties from organizing and any party from sponsoring religious propaganda, the Independent Party of Mozambique (PIMO), a predominantly Muslim group without representation in Parliament, has taken positions based on religious principles, advocated moral behavior, and criticized the government for corruption. The Government has thus far tolerated PIMO's activities, and PIMO remains a minor political party. There have been several efforts recently to unify the often divided Islamic community in Mozambique. In September 2003, a national meeting of Muslims was held in the central provincial capital of Beira, with the aim of encouraging local Muslims to become more involved in health and education in remote areas of the country.

RECENT AND ONGOING EFFORTS BY POST

4. (SBU) a) In 2002, post established an American Corner at Mussa Bin Bique University, an Islamic university located in Nampula. In the past year, the Ambassador has spoken at the University, and Public Affairs is planning on using much of its library allotment for FY 2004 on acquiring additional materials to strengthen the outreach efforts of this American Corner.
b) In the past, post has sent prominent Muslim leaders on International Visitor (IV) programs. These have included Jose Abudo, current Minister of Justice, and David Cassimo, a leading theologian, Imam and member of Conselho dos Alimos de Mocambique. This year, post has already nominated Suleimane Amuji, the prominent Muslim mayor of Vilankulos, to participate in a Democratic Governance and Civic Participation IV program. Amuji's nomination is part of a larger USAID initiative to work with key municipal leaders elected in 2003. Post also intends to nominate participants for the Leadership and Muslim Community IV program.
c) In the past year, the Ambassador has launched a Mission Speakers Initiative to send teams of Mission personnel to speak at local high schools. The Mission intends to expand this program to include speaking at religious-affiliated high schools, including Muslim high schools.
d) Additionally, as part of its PEPFAR plan, the Mission is working with the Aga Kahn Foundation to assess available HIV-related services and develop a 5-year operational plan for an HIV/AIDS program in Cabo Delgado, a predominantly Muslim province, linked with a new USG-supported anti-retroviral therapy site.
e) The USAID Food Security programs focus is on helping rural Mozambicans learn and develop the knowledge, skills and technology they need to produce more food, increase their household incomes and reduce malnutrition among their children. These programs operate in the Northern provinces of Nampula, Zambezia, Sofala and Manica, where they reach communities with large Muslim populations.
f) The Mission will also be designating a Religious Affairs Officer whose portfolio will include strategic outreach initiatives and increased dialogue with key members of

Mozambique's Muslim community.
LA LIME